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BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PUBLICATION.

Zoölogical Bibliography and Publication.— *Second Report of the Committee, consisting of* Sir W. H. FLOWER (*Chairman*), Professor W. A. HERDMAN, Mr. W. E. HOYLE, Dr. P. L. SCLATER, Mr. ADAM SEDGWICK, Dr. D. SHARP, Mr. C. D. SHERBORN, Rev. T. R. R. STEBBING, Professor W. F. R. WELDON, and Mr. F. A. BATHER (*Secretary*).

The Committee wishes to state clearly that it has no wish, even if it had the authority, to lay down laws for zoölogists or for publishing bodies and editors. It is, however, plain that many are grateful for some guidance, and the Committee hopes that it may serve as a medium for conveying to those who need it the general opinion of the experienced. There are also difficulties which, though they appear to some insuperable, may possibly be surmounted in ways that have been communicated to the Committee.

(1) 'That each part of a serial publication should have the date of actual publication, as near as may be, printed on the wrapper, and, when possible, on the last sheet sent to press.'

Five correspondents do not see the use of this, thinking that the date on the wrapper is enough, and that in the case of annual publications the date of the year suffices. The Committee would point out that wrappers are constantly lost in binding, and that periodicals are often broken up by specialists or secondhand booksellers, the consequent loss of date causing much trouble to workers of a later day. To avoid this, the Cincinnati Society of Natural History would add the date at the head of each paper, while *Natural Science* prints the month and year across every page opening. Some societies, e.g., the Philadelphia Academy, issue a certificate of dates at the end of the volume. The Liverpool Biological Society 'put at the head of each paper the date when it is read, and are willing to add the date when it is printed off'; neither of these dates are necessary, and they may be misleading. In most cases the actual day of publication is immaterial, especially in cases where no new species are described, but at least the month should always be given, and the Committee does not see that there need be any difficulty in doing

this. If some unforeseen delay does occur, the date can always be rectified with a date stamp.

- (2) 'That authors' separate copies should be issued with the original pagination and plate numbers clearly indicated on each page and plate, and with a reference to the original place of publication.'

The Committee believes this to be a most important recommendation, and its view is supported by all the zoölogists consulted. Nevertheless, many leading publications continue to issue authors' copies repaged, and often without reference to volume number, date, or even the name of the periodical. The remedy is so simple that the Committee urgently appeals for its universal application.

- (3) 'That authors' separate copies should not be distributed privately before the paper has been published in the regular manner.'

It is a curious fact that on this question editors take a different line to working zoölogists. All the latter who have discussed the matter agree with the Committee as to the extreme inconvenience caused by the general custom. Among the editors, however, nine (*i.e.*, nearly one-quarter) protest against the present recommendation. The objectors represent small societies which publish at lengthy intervals, and their reasons are: that it is not fair to an author to prevent him from receiving his separate copies for perhaps a year; that it is not to the advantage of science that work should thus be delayed; that a society which did this would receive fewer contributions and lose its members. In brief, the argument is: 'We are too poor to publish properly; therefore we must allow authors to publish improperly.' This form of argument suggests an easy remedy, and one that, on the informal suggestion of the Committee, has already been put into practice by the Liverpool Biological Society and by the R. Physical Society of Edinburgh. The remedy is this:

In cases where a volume or part can only appear at long intervals, each author that requires separate copies of his paper for private distribution before its publication in the volume or part should be permitted them only on this condition — that, for every month before the probable issue of the volume, a certain number of copies — say five — should be placed by him in the hands of the society or its accredited publisher, in order that they may be offered for sale to the public at a fixed price. Further, that the society, for its part, should announce the publication, with price and

agent, of their papers to some recognized office, or to some such paper as the *Zoologischer Anzeiger*. The details of expense must be settled between the author and the society.

(4) 'That it is desirable to express the subject of one's paper in its title, while keeping the title as concise as possible.'

It is satisfactory to find no objections raised to this recommendation, since there is no doubt that there is room for much improvement in this direction. Such phrases as 'Further contributions towards our knowledge of the . . .', or 'Einige Beobachtungen über . . .', or 'Essai d'une Monographie du genre . . .', might well be dispensed with as superfluous. The ornithologist who, in 1895, published a book with a title of ninety-one words would seem to have forgotten the functions of a preface.

On the other hand, it is pointed out that certain periodicals, such as the *Bulletin de la Société Entomologique de France* and the *Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft naturforschender Freunde zu Berlin*, publish communications without any title, to the constant confusion of naturalists. The Committee begs to urge the reform of this practice, in which it can see no advantage.

(5) 'That new species should be properly diagnosed, and figured when possible.'

The only comment on this is the proposed omission of the words 'when possible.' With this the Committee sympathize, but wish to avoid all appearance of laying down a law that would constantly be broken.

(6) 'That new names should not be proposed in irrelevant footnotes or anonymous paragraphs.'

Naturally nobody supports such actions as are here objected to, but since some have doubted the possibility of the latter, it is as well to state that the suggestion was based on an actual case occurring in the Report of a well-known International Congress. The proposal of a new name, without diagnosis, in a footnote to a student's text-book, or in a short review of a work by another author, is a by no means rare occurrence. The Committee believes that such practices are calculated to throw nomenclature into confusion rather than to advance science.

(7) 'That references to previous publications should be made fully and correctly if possible, in accordance with one of the recognized sets of rules for quotation, such as that recently adopted by the French Zoölogical Society.'

Dr. Paul Mayer, of Naples, writes : ‘ Most authors are extremely idle in making good lists of literature themselves, and even oppose my correcting them according to our rules. There ought to be some training in this at our Universities.’ This is confirmed by one or two other editors, but not all have the energy of Dr. Mayer. Some, indeed, oppose the word ‘ fully ’ on the ground that it leads to waste of time and space. The Committee would explain that the reference to a particular set of rules was intended merely as a guide to those who have not had the training that Dr. Mayer would like to see ; they would also point out, in the words of the editor of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History, that ‘ what may be intelligible to the specialist is very puzzling to the general student.’ Nowadays, when so many zoölogists work with the aid of authors’ separate copies, it is an enormous convenience to them to have the title of the paper at least indicated, and not merely the volume, date, and pagination given. The Committee, therefore, cannot agree that this suggestion involves a waste of time.

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